

08 - 10 August 2025
Berlin, Germany

The Academic Sphere as an Opportunity for Empowerment: The Teacher Training Track through the Eyes of Arab-Bedouin Women in Israel

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Abstract

The academic sphere in Israel presents a unique and challenging environment for Arab-Bedouin women, particularly those seeking to enter the teaching profession. This study, based on semi-structured in-depth interviews with 20 Arab-Bedouin female students enrolled in teacher training institutions in southern Israel, aims to explore their personal, social, and professional experiences throughout their academic journey. Thematic content analysis of the data reveals that higher education serves as a space for personal growth, the breaking of gender and tribal boundaries, and the development of social connections with diverse groups. The academic campus is perceived as a hub of democracy and professional identity formation, contributing to the students' personal advancement and future integration into the labor market, while maintaining community support. The study's conclusions highlight the need to strengthen pedagogical and emotional support, develop culturally responsive training tracks, and promote female mentorship and open dialogue spaces that empower the students throughout their training.

Keywords: arab-bedouin women, higher education, teacher training, female empowerment, academic space, culturally responsive pedagogy.